Conclusions and Recommendations

It is obvious that a long-term strategy for ground water protection is to reduce and/or eliminate the sources of contamination. There are cases where source reduction offers a potentially powerful and cost-effective means of minimizing ground water pollution. In general, the state programs examined are weak in source reduction programs such as waste incineration, recycling, and better management practices; it is evident that additional incentives are needed to accelerate and expand source reduction efforts by industry and the public. Therefore, the committee recommends the following:

- States should consider regulatory and economic incentives for source reduction by industry, government, commercial interests, and the public. States should also consider a variety of financial assistance programs to encourage waste reduction in industry, such as low-interest or no-interest government loans for capital cost of new equipment or environmental audits to determine the best way of reducing waste generation; tax reductions or credits; grants or other aid to encourage smaller firms to pool resources and implement a joint waste reduction strategy; government subsidies to firms actively working on new methods of reducing waste; financial assistance to waste exchanges to encourage more recycling and reuse of materials that might otherwise be disposed of on the land or into ground water.
- State agencies, university-based groups, trade associations, and other institutions should develop educational programs for local industries and the public to disseminate information on waste reduction technology and assist them in implementing waste reduction practices. Specific emphasis should be on medium- and small-sized generators of industrial waste, which do not have the expertise or time to keep abreast of technological innovation.
- The committee believes that EPA should fund additional research on source reduction technologies. EPA should also fund programs that include research into public and private practices in the use of substances that are potential ground water contaminants.

Prohibition of polluting activities is one of the most effective means of source reduction. This includes eliminating ground and underground discharges, banning the use of potentially polluting products, and prohibiting certain activities in important ground water recharge areas. Several areas of the country have used prohibition of polluting activities successfully through source regulation or land use controls. For example, Suffolk County (New York) and the state of Connecticut have banned the use of organic septic system cleaners.